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MANAGEMENT COUNCIL NEWSLETTER

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A summary of significant events of
interest to USDA management

FEB 14 '79 Issue #9
April 18, 1975

MANAGEMENT AND BUDGET

MANAGEMENT COUNCIL ACTIONS.....

Highlights of April 10 Council Meeting.....

A proposal was discussed to amend the AR's to remove the requirement that each individual foreign trip be approved by an Assistant Secretary. It was agreed that additional background work would be done and the proposal would then again be brought before the Council.

Sy Pranger and Charles Stanislav, OP, discussed "What Not To Do" concerning EEO complaints, adverse actions, grievances and other appeals. It was stressed that when an EEO complaint is filed, all actions in the case involved are subject to review -- procedural matters, the merits of the case, etc. If there is anything in the record to show the complaint will be sustained, the agency should resolve it at the earliest possible opportunity to save money. Also emphasized was the importance of being certain the record was documented completely.

The problem of getting photocomposition for publications was discussed. It was agreed that OO, OC and OADS will form a task force to study the matter and report back to the Council.

It was noted that Mr. Wright, in his statement before the Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Agriculture and Related Agencies, discussed the Management Council. He stated the Council was the key to improving communication with the program agencies.

Highlights of April 17 Council Meeting.....

Due Dates.....

...Agency comments on the draft USDA EEO action plan for FY 1976 are due in OP on April 23.

...Agency EEO plans are due in OP by June 1.

Current guidelines concerning rating supervisory performance in equal employment opportunity and civil rights were discussed. It was agreed that OP and OEO will revise these. They will then work with each agency to refine the guidelines for individual agency use. The revision of the performance evaluation form to include these guidelines will be explored but only after the current test is concluded. OP and OEO will report their recommendations to the Council before the form is revised.

Discussion of the following topics was postponed to a future meeting:

...Interagency Committee on Overseas Assessments and Benefits for U.S. Civilian Employees

...Upcoming ADS Conference

...Oral progress reports on Project Overhead by Verne Bathurst and Jack Deinema. However, the first draft reports on these Task Forces on Training and Printing/Duplication have been received. The tentative findings indicate a total potential savings of up-to \$4,000,000 could be effected through management improvement. The draft reports are being reviewed and will be presented to the Council when the reports are refined.

MANAGEMENT COUNCIL MEETINGS REPORTED IN NEWSLETTER..... Suggestions have been made to publish formal minutes of the Council meetings. However, no formal minutes are kept. The Newsletter has been, and will continue to be, the vehicle for reporting actions which take place in the meetings.

MR. WRIGHT AND MR. BOLDOC MEET WITH AGENCY HEADS..... In a series of meetings, they have been continuing previous discussions concerning the cost and quality of services provided the agencies by the Office of the Secretary. The talks have focused on efforts, in cooperation with the Management Council, to reduce costs and improve services. (Contact: J.P. Bolduc, SEC, ext. 77247)

PRESIDENT SIGNS RESCISSION BILLS..... H. R. 3260 and H.R. 4075 were approved April 8, 1975 (See Issue #8 for details of bills). (Contact: Tom McQuillan, OMF, ext. 75901)

MANAGEMENT ANALYSIS OFFICERS TO MEET..... The Agency Management Analysis Officers Group (AMAOG) will hold their annual conference April 27-29 at the Sheraton Motor Inn in Fredericksburg, Va. The theme of this year's conference is "Management Effectiveness with Diminishing Resources". Speakers will include Rudolph Penner from OMB and John Cole of CSC. (Contact: Ken Hatch, OMF, ext. 75301)

PERSONNEL

ACTION NEEDED TO REDUCE PERSONNEL COSTS.....CSC has informed all Departments of the President's concern over rising personnel costs. USDA is taking several actions to review and reduce personnel costs. For example, OP is (1) developing new Departmental guidelines on position management; (2) requesting positions be reviewed as they become vacant to determine the accuracy of the classification of the position; (3) preparing to issue a Personnel Bulletin encouraging recruitment at the lowest practicable levels for all positions in USDA; and (4) currently piloting a new performance evaluation and merit promotion system in SCS and ARS to improve the selection of employees for promotion. Agencies have been asked for reports on their efforts to reduce personnel costs. Sy Pranger discussed the concern over personnel costs at the March 20 meeting of the Council. (Contact: Linda Brick, OP, ext. 77525)

NEW GARNISHMENT LAW EFFECTIVE JULY 15.....It provides for garnishment of Federal and postal employee and military personnel salaries and annuities for nonpayment of child-support and alimony. HEW, assisted by CSC, is drafting regulations to put the new provisions into effect. The new law affects nonpayment of child-support and alimony payments in the past, as well as in the future. (Contact: Verna Deane Brown, OP, ext. 73641)

MARS IS OPERATIONAL AT WASHINGTON COMPUTER CENTER.....The Management Council, at its New Orleans meeting, decided that the MARS personnel data base would be placed in active status here. This has been done. The Skills Inventory System that has been on-line at the Washington Computer Center has been discontinued. Agency personnel have been trained in using System 2000 to retrieve data from MARS. Each personnel office has access to its own files only. An account number has been assigned to each Agency. The load/update costs will be prorated to the Agencies on a per capita basis, the same as was done for the discontinued Skills Inventory System. The costs for the queries will be a separate statement. (Contact: K.W. Bradley, OP, ext. 73641)

MR. YEUTTER NOMINATED TO BE DEPUTY SPECIAL TRADE REPRESENTATIVE (DOMESTIC)....The White House forwarded the nomination to the Senate on April 16. Senate confirmation is required.

CENTRAL SERVICES

ADDITIONAL \$1,000,000 TO BE REFUNDED.....This rebate to the users of the New Orleans Computer Center will be reflected in March billings. It is in addition to the earlier refund reported in Issue #2. (Contact: H.W. Meetze, OADS, ext. 76275)

NEW COMPUTER PROCUREMENT AND COMPUTER CENTER RATE STRUCTURES ON AGENDA FOR ADS CONFERENCE.....These were two major issues submitted for discussion and will be addressed in detail. Several lesser problem areas will also be discussed. (Contact: H.W. Meetze, OADS, ext. 76275)

EQUAL OPPORTUNITY

CIVIL RIGHTS IMPACT STATEMENTS TO BE TESTED BY FS, ASCS AND OO.....Prior to full application, proposed Secretary's Memorandum 1662, Supplement 7 (Civil Rights Impact Statement) will be tested from July 1 - Sept. 30. The supplement is intended to incorporate civil rights awareness and action into such activities as:

- (1) Changes in or new rules, regulations or policies to be published in the Federal Register.
- (2) Projects for which Environmental Impact Statements are required.
- (3) Decisions made by agency personnel that affect program delivery to the public, but are not for publication in the Federal Register.
- (4) Relocation of offices or laboratories employing 10 or more employees.

Agency heads will be responsible for determining the civil rights impact of all categories listed above. (Contact: Percy Luney, OEO, ext. 74563)

OTHER

SECRETARY EXTENDS SAVINGS BOND CAMPAIGN THROUGH APRIL.....Progress to date has not met our goal of 80%. All allotment cards (SF-1192) should be forwarded to NFC promptly, even if payroll deductions are not to start until sometime in the future, so that all participants -- present and future -- can be included in our current figures. Also, particular attention should be given to be certain that all new employees have the chance to participate. (Contact: R.R. Rhodes, ARS, ext. 68401)